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THE NATIVITY/CHRISTMAS CYCLE

The Christmas decorations have been up for some weeks and the gift-buying frenzy well on its way when the Church tells us that it is time to start purifying our soul and body so that we can properly partake of the great spiritual reality of Christ's Coming on December 25/January 7. We enter this period called the Christmas Fast or Philipovka on November 15/28.

This fasting season does not have the same intense liturgical emphasis which is characteristic of the Great Lent before Easter/Paska. It is more "ascetical." However, it is reflected in the life of the Church in a number of ways which announce and prepare us for the coming Feast.

Little by little the theme of the Nativity is introduced into the services. The first mention is made on the eve of the Holy Day of the Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple. We hear for the first time on Nov. 21/Dec. 4 the announcement: "Christ is Born! Glorify Him!" With these words, the entire mood of the life of the Church changes. It is as if we perceive far, far away – the first light of the greatest possible joy – the coming of God into His world!

Then on the two Sundays before the Nativity/Christmas, the Church commemorates the Forefathers and Fathers: who are the prophets and the saints of the Old Testament who prepare us for the coming, who made history itself into the expectation, the waiting for, the salvation and reconciliation of mankind with God.

Finally, on December 20/January 2, the Church leads us into the Forefeast of the Nativity. The liturgical structure is similar to that of Holy Week, which we observe before Paska/Easter.

The Eve of the Holy Day is dedicated to a specially strict fast. Many observe a special meal; while all eat of grain known as kulivo or kutya.

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ST. NICHOLAS

The small church in New York, which was destroyed by the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, was dedicated to St. Nicholas. The city of Bari, Italy pledged $500,000 to help in rebuilding St. Nicholas Church. One of the reasons given is that there is a cathedral in Bari dedicated to St. Nicholas. This contains his relics.

Who is St. Nicholas?

He is one of the oldest official saints of the Orthodox and Catholic churches. Unfortunately, he is a bit of a paradox in the calendar of saints. He was a bishop and a worker of miracles, but in the 20th century, his cult has been hijacked by pagan Western commercialism. But whatever, the confusion surrounding him today, the real Santa Claus, St. Nicholas was a fantastic figure and his feast day on December 6/19 is well worth celebrating.

He lived in what is now Southern Turkey on the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean. In the early fourth century he was bishop of Myra, a town now known as Demre.

He was a strong defender of the Church against the Arian heresy, which denied Christ's divinity. He attended the Council of Nicea in 325. That council condemned Arianism and instituted the Nicene Creed, which is said at every Divine Liturgy and at many other services. It affirms that Jesus is: "Begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light, true God of true God..." Such was

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LETTER
(written in bulletin
after Sept. 11, 2001)

My dear Brothers and Sisters.

If I would say that we are living in a very uneasy time, will you argue with me? Will you tell me that there was a time better than the current one? Were you less afraid of going out to the street or shopping mall, or taking an airplane, going away for vacation? Is it such news for you that the devil exists and he is around always and he attacks you whenever he pleases? And he is targeting your heart, your very life. And if you are the lucky one to be alive – it is too early to rejoice – he still targets your soul to plant a hatred, or fear, or despair, he leaves alone no one, especially us, those who believe in God. We are enemies of evil or very often we think we are, or we are sort of passive enemies, verbal ones – we renounce evil during talk over coffee and welcome him with our self-centeredness. He kills, he injures, he multiplies orphans and widows, he makes us doubt God or Church, he makes us to look around with suspicion and distrust. Don't. God is alive. He has His permanent place in our souls. Call on His Holy name, share your love and compassion, pray for each other.

Fr. Yakov
(Manhattan, New York)

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EXAMPLE

God has been pushed out of many homes and replaced by the unholy trinity of greed, sex and power. Religion is no longer practiced in many homes because parents are too busy with their careers or other endeavors to bother. If God and His Church are not important to the parents, why should they be to the children?

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NEWS CHRONOLOGY

DECEMBER 2001

THE LEMKOS were forcefully resettled in a drastic and violent Operation Vistula in1947. Their lands which were confiscated will now be restored to them or their heirs. Poland's Supreme Administrative Court passed a precedent verdict in a case in October, concerning the property of Maria Hladyk.

THE FIRST CROSS ON THE MOON was a Russian Orthodox baptismal cross of the daughter of an engineer who was working at the Cape at the time.

A CASSETTE OF CHRISTMAS MUSIC is available from SS for $12ppd from John Sutko, 20 801 8020 S Major Ave., Burbank, IL 60459. Phone 708-424-3592. The SS Peter and Paul Choir of Chicago, directed by Mr. Sutko, sings the familiar carols in English and the different Slavic languages.

THE BEST DIVINE LITURGY on cassette or CD is again available. The Russian Liturgical Singers, directed by George Margitich, chanted by Fr. George Burdikoff, have done a memorable rendition. Send $17 for CD or $12 for cassette to Harry Nalesnik, PO Box 1285, Montclair, NJ 07042 for the Slavonic recording.

ST. SOPHIA ORTHODOX ACADEMY, a day school, has been established in the JOHNSTOWN, PA area.

IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS, 256,000 pieces of art and cultural valuables have been returned to Russia. Italy returned 45 icons in August and will soon return 850 antiquities illegally taken to Italy in 1996.

THE MOTHER CHURCH for Orthodox gypsies is located in Kokycany, 70 miles from Prague. David Dudas, a seminarian and a native gypsy, was ordained a reader with hopes to eventually be ordained a priest for the Holy Trinity Church in Kokycany, Czech Republic.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 16TH CENTURY icons were placed above two towers in the Moscow Kremlin. These icons of the Saviour and St. Nicholas remained there until 1917. Patriarch Alexei gave two mosaics as gifts to be placed in the long vacant areas. Mosaics were selected because of air pollution.

THE ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE is progressing to Phase III in its building plans. A museum will be built to house the artifacts, icons and other treasures now found in a wing of the Heritage and Learning Center. It is located in Bolivar, PA.

FOUNDATIONS FOR A NEW ALL-WEATHER CABIN have been poured at St. Sava (Serbian) Camp in Shadeland, PA. The camp will be ready for year-round use.

A PRIEST RECENTLY REPORTED that among adult converts, nearly two-thirds lapsed on or near their third anniversary of reception. It seemed that amount of time of catechesis was irrelevant.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF ST. JAMES, PO Box 410788, Chicago, IL 60641 publishes a magazine Touchstone 10 times a year and Daily Devotional Guide four times a year. It has writers with Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox viewpoints. The publications would be of interest to families who have members in different groups or who are studying Orthodoxy and need a point of reference. For info on ordering, call 1-800-783-4903.

FROM A SUNDAY BULLETIN: To our visitors praying with us today. We would like you to be aware that the reception of the Sacrament of Holy Communion is RESERVED FOR BAPTIZED AND CHRISMATED MEMBERS OF OUR EASTERN ORTHODOX FAITH. Proper preparation through fasting and the Sacrament of Confession is required in order to receive the gifts of the Precious Body and Blood of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We are not yet in formal inter-communion with all other faiths, although we have much respect for their rite of worship and their sanctuaries of prayer.

THE ST. ANDREW SERVICE BOOK containing the rites and services according to the Western Rite usage in the Antiochin Archdiocese in North America is available for $22 from Archdiocese Bookstore, 358 Mountain Road, Englewood, NJ 07631.

THE PERIODIC TABLE OF ELEMENTS was established by Dimitri Mendeleev, who was born in Tobolsk, Russia and studied in St. Petersburg. The periodic table has changed from its original version, but he was able to predict a number of then-undiscovered elements such as aluminum and silicone. He lived from 1834-1907.

GET OUT THAT BOX. Put in the videos, cassettes and CDs your college-bound child left and will never want again. Add some craft supplies, office supplies, large size clothing, personal care items, and send them to Eastern Orthodox Foundation, PO Box 432, Indiana, PA 15701.

JOURNEY ACROSS NORTH AMERICA, about SS. Innocent, Tikhon, Herman, is a 128-page book for children available from St. Ignatius Press, 442 Charles St., Lima, OH 45805-3365 for $14 ppd. For more info call 419-222-2029.

CORNELL GERONTOLOGY RESEARCH INSTITUTE wants to know why people who belong to religious organizations and attend services more frequently tend to live longer than others. Data will be collected by denominations (for the first time). The nationwide study will explore links between religion and health.

A LIST OF BOOKS written by Professor Constantine Tsirpanlis is available at 12 Minuet Lane, Kingston, NY 12401. His latest book, Responses to 517 Questions, on Greek Orthodox Christianity, Roman Catholic Tradition, Protestantism and Modern Cults is available for $32 ppd.

Continued from front page)
THE NATIVITY

At the Church, the customary festive Compline Service is celebrated. If, like this year, the Eve falls during the week, then in the morning the Imperial Hours are read, followed by the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, which is preceded by Vespers. On the great day itself, Christmas, we hear chanted the familiar Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.

"Come, O faithful, let us cry to Him: O God, born of a Virgin, have mercy on us!"

Continued from front page)
ST. NICHOLAS

St. Nicholas' infuriation with Arius, proponent of the Arian heresy, that it is said that he struck the apostate so severely
that "the bones in his bodies rattled."

Following St. Nicholas' death in 342, he became the subject of popular devotion and many miracles which spread among the general population along the shores of the Mediterranean. In the 6th century, the Emperor Justinian built a church in his honor in Constantinople. His fame then spread along the Black Sea coast and deep into Eastern Europe. Eventually he became the patron saint of Holy Russia, where there were eventually more churches dedicated to him than to any other saint exceeded only to those dedicated to the Mother of God.

In 1087, his relics were taken from Myra (Orthodox Church) to Bari, under controversial circumstances. Italians (Roman Catholic) claim that they were transferred by devout merchants; but in Turkey, it is said that they were taken there by pirates.

In Demre, the Cathedral of St. Nicholas is now a ruin. There are no longer any Christians living in Demre, the home town of St. Nicholas; however, local businessmen have founded a charitable foundation which each year awards a peace prize to an international figure. The Dalai Lama was once an honoree. Perhaps, the small church in New York will be remembered this year!

ETHNIC CHUCKLE

Dorohaya Tyotya Marea,

Yak tam kolo vas. Toot yah mala takee experience!

About one week ago, yah peeshla shopping doh supermarket. Yah walking down aisle kolee me rubber elastic peeshol, POF eh me skirt began to padah. Yah tak skoro squat so that skirt neh upal na floorh. Yah unbutton me coat, grabuyuh me skirt, try to bunch it up. Neh mohla, so yah decided yah holding it with one ruky (hand). Yah button vsi gombitchkee lem one ee yah tremam me skirt with hand in coat.

Yah mala takee trouble zhe yah dumam zhe yah better not finish tot shopping. Yah peshla doh checkout counter. Yah tremala me skirt with one rucku ee plateela bill with druhu.

Yak yah peeshla na vonka, cheloveek preshol doh menhe e kazhe: "Mam, I'd like to see you in my office." Yah yemu kazhu: "I don't want to go anywhere with you mister." Ohn me povel: "I bet you don't."

Oha bral me cart ee pushyuyeh back doh storu. Yah krechu: "Shtop." No one listened. Yah neh mala much choice. Yah followed him, yestyeh tremam me skirt. Me preshle doh yeho office. Ohn kazhyeh me: "Lady, I saw you putting something under your coat while you were in Aisle 3." Ya kazhu: "How, yah didn't see anyone." Ohn poveel: "Look over there lady, we have closed circuit TV in this store." Yah getting take nervous. Yah kretchyu; "No, no, I didn't take anything, mister." A ohn said: "Look, lady, you sure are a cool one. You're holding the evidence right under your coat, right now." Yah neh znam shto doing. Then ohn graboval me hand. Me skirt pall nah floor. Yah bulla taka barz embarrassed. A ohn bull takee chervenee! Anyhow, shitko turned out OK. Yah dostala malee due slip ot storeu.

Budte zdrovee
Nearly jailbird
Hanya

* * * * * *

He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass.

NOTES ON OUR 50TH

Your "Herald" has been uplifting for almost 50 years. My brother, Michael, sent me a subscription when he was in the Air Force. The Word of God has cemented our faith and has covered us through many difficult times.

Vera and John Backovski

Thank you for publishing **The Orthodox Herald** all these years. You have done an outstanding job and I look forward each month to the publication as do my friends that I have given subscriptions to in the past years. **The Orthodox Herald** is very informative and I like the Ethnic Chuckle. It takes me back many years to Mpls. where I was born. Katherine Gallacher

Among the subscribers in October were many who have been with us most of our 50 years. Among them are Michael Kruge, William Mizgala, Thomas Remchick, Andrew Dacko and Ann Smerechnak. Michael Wesdel plans to put all 50-year subscribers on our web site. www.orthodoxherald.homestead.com.

WINTER'S GRACE

In Growing Old, a prose poem which Alexandr Solzhenitsyn (83) wrote recently, he said:

"How much easier it is then, how much more receptive we are to death, when advancing years guide us softly to our end. Aging thus is in no sense a punishment from on high, but brings its own blessings and a warmth of colors all its own... There is even warmth to be drawn from the waning of your own strength compared with the past – just to think how sturdy I once used to be! You can no longer go through a whole day's work at a stretch, but how good it is to slip into the brief oblivion of sleep, and what a gift to wake once more to the clarity of your second or third morning of the day. And your spirit can find delight in limiting your intake of food, in abandoning the pursuit of novel flavors. You are still in life, yet you are rising above the material plane... Growing old serenely is not a downhill path but an ascent."

SOBORNOST

The First Council

Once Peter had left Jerusalem (Acts 12:17), James is the one who is always mentioned as leader of the Church there – James "the brother of the Lord." Orthodox theologians contend that the role James played at Jerusalem is comparable with the part bishops were to play later on: a life-long and continuous place as leader of a local church, with a group of presbyters in support. While Scripture does not call him *episkopos* (for the term is used in this period synonymously with *presbyter,* see Acts 15:17 and 20:28; and Titus 1:5-9), the East sees him as the first "monarchical" bishop of a local church. And he, in fact, presides over the first Council, properly speaking, in the history of the Church.

The story of the Council of Jerusalem is described in Acts 15. Attended by "the apostles...presbyters...and the whole Church..." (Acts 15:22), this Council met in the Holy City in 49 A.D. to decide how far Gentile converts to the Way of Christ should be subject to the Old Testament Law. Charges had been brought against Paul and Barnabas by Christians brought up with a Pharisaic background. In the deliberations of the Church in council, Peter took the side of Paul and Barnabas; his intervention in the debate restored peace. The assembly then listened to Barnabas and Paul. When they held their peace, it was James' turn to have the last word. He repeated Peter's arguments in justification of Paul and Barnabas, and supported them with a quotation from Isaiah. He brought an end to the debate: "Therefore my judgment is..." (Acts 15:19)

Koulomzine contends,

> While Peter's intervention may seem to have carried more weight in the meeting, the presidency of the assembly belonged to James alone. He had the final summation; he pronounced the final judgment, in the first person. This part was his by right of place, for he was inside the Church of Jerusalem and its leader (with the presbyters supporting him), ever since Peter had left.[58]

When the council finally reached its conclusion, there came the apostolic pronouncement: "It seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us..." (Acts 15:28). Councils, to this very day, have dared to speak with this same sense of confidence.

Bishop Kallistos Ware explains:

> An isolated individual may well hesitate to say: "It seemed right to the Holy Spirit and to **me**," but when gathered in council, the members of the Church can together claim an authority which individually none of them possesses.[59]

And indeed, this famous Apostolic Council has become the manifestation and the prototype of *sobornost* in practice.

Fr. Michael Dahulich, Ph.D.

THE COMPLETE GENEALOGY

Have you ever tried to trace your family tree? It is fascinating to go back several generations to learn about your ancestors and to study your roots.

Perhaps, there is no genealogy as impressive as that of our Lord, Jesus Christ, nor one as important, nor one which elicts so many questions. This later is caused by the giving of two genealogies in the Bible. On the Sunday before the Nativity/Christmas, we hear one version read from St. Matthew 1:1-17. If we check Luke 3:23-38, we will read an entirely different one. Why do they differ? Is this a mistake or what?

In order for the early Christians to convincingly prove that Jesus was the Messiah for whom the Jews had waited for centuries, it had to be shown that He was the fulfillment of all the prophesies of the Old Testament that dealt with this matter.

St. Matthew and St. Luke follow His genealogy from the different tribes from which He descended. Although one was the tribe of Juda and the other that of Levi, they were united in a fusion of the line of descent.

St. Matthew assigns Jesus family to the tribe of Juda. He traces Christ's lineage back to Abraham, the father of the Hebrew nation. It shows that Jesus is a descendent of King David and Solomon and other kings. The Saviour would be looked upon as the new "King of Israel."

St. Luke, meanwhile, looks at the genealogy of Christ from a slightly different perspective. He traces Him from the tribe of Levi, which shows that He came from a heritage of priests and was filled with holiness. He begins with Joseph and works upward through Adam, thereby also connecting Him with the beginning of the human race.

These readings taken together show His whole genealogy.

BELARUS TOUR

We have been so busy studying the history and the people of Russia and Carpatho-Russia that we have neglected to learn about Belarus. Looking through our extensive library, we couldn't find any book which dealt exclusively with the Belarus people. We have been busily checking references and indexes in general Russian history books.

For instance in our limited study, we have found that Brest is important in church history as the Union of Brest was signed in 1596, which established the Uniate Church in Belarus. The country at this time was under Polish rule (Roman Catholic) and the government supported this union and opposed Orthodox presence. Orthodox were persecuted by the authorities but they remained in the majority. It wasn't until 1874, with political change, that the return to Orthodoxy took place.

Politically, the Soviet-German Treaty was signed in Brest on March 1918. Again in June 1941, the Germans tried to enter Russia through the Brest area. A brave group of 40 men held them off for 2 months at the Fortress Gate. There is now an eternal light in their memory. However, after the Nazi entered Belarus lands, 200 cities were destroyed and over 9200 villages and towns were obliterated from the face of this earth. The death toll included 2 million 230 thousand people. No wonder, it is almost impossible to find relatives or do a genealogical research.

We are planning a tour to Belarus in 2002.

Please let us know by December 31 if you have even a glimmer of interest in a tour. We do not consider this a commitment. Planning a tour to this area will be difficult because it is not on a regular tour route much like our former tours to the Carpathian areas.

* * * * * *

The devil is willing for a person to profess Christianity as long as he does not practice it.

BIBLE QUIZ

1. What apostle was released from prison by an angel who opened the prison's iron gate?
2. The angel of the Lord instructed Philip to to go to Gaza. What person did Philip encounter afterwards?
3. What was the name of the angel who appeared to Mary and to Zacharias?
4. Elijah was nurtured by an angel after his flight from Israel's evil queen. Who was he?
5. Jacob is the only person known to have wrestled with an angel. What kindly act did the angel perform after the wrestling match?
6. What kind of angelic beings guarded the entrance to Eden?
7. Who had his lips touched by a live coal held by a (angel) seraph?

ANSWERS:
1. Peter (Acts 12:1-19)
2. The Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39)
3. Gabriel (Luke 1:5-38)
4. Jezebel (I King 19:1-8)
5. He blessed Jacob (Genesis 32:24-20)
6. Cherubim (Genesis 3:24)
7. Isaiah (6:5-7)

REMEMBERED

Remembered from the Christmas Eve Service (Compline) is the repetitive singing of: "S Nami Boh – God is with us!" It is memorable, especially when the composition of is sung.

This hymn is referred to as the song of Prophet Isaiah. However, it was not compiled in its present form until a much later date from the 8th and 9th chapters of the Book of Isaiah. After foretelling the virgin birth of the Messiah in 7:14: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." Isaiah describes the attributes of the name given to this Holy Child in 9:6 he writes: "His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." He then prophesies that: "He will sit upon the throne of David to order it and establish it with judgment and justice." 1:7.

This prophecy was made at the time when there was war in Judah and the people were afraid and instead of placing their hope in God and asking for His help, they put greater hope in human power and so Isaiah wrote that human power would fail but the Lord God would conquer through His "Immanuel." Immanuel being the Hebrew name for the Messiah. It means "God is with us – S nami Boh!" (Matt 1:23)

In this Song of Isaiah, which dominates the Great Compline, the soul of Isaiah shines forth and our hearts are filled with the message of Christmas – hope and encouragement.

PRAYER BEFORE READING BIBLE

You will get the most out of your Bible reading by starting not with the reading but with prayer. Prayer is a remarkable privilege. It is as if you began perusing a book on some deep subject by calling on the author for his help in understanding what you were about to read. What a tremendous advantage that can be! The author of the Bible, God, offers you that privilege.

James (1:5, 6), a leader of the church in Jerusalem, wrote to other Christian believers in the first century: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind."

Wisdom is the practical application of knowledge. So before opening your Bible, ask God to help you recognize points in your reading that need to be applied in your personal life. Associate new things learned with previous knowledge. Fit them into "the pattern of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13) you have come to recognize.

Don't read just to cover pages. Take your time. Dwell on what you are reading. When intrigued by a certain point, look up the cross references if your Bible contains such. If the point is still not clear, make a note to do further research later. As you read, mark the texts you especially want to remember or copy them. You may also add personal notes and cross references in the margin.

Our daily prayers and Bible reading should not be a chore but a real delight. It is both profitable and pleasurable. But is it enough? For this to be fruitful, we must do it with a view to applying the knowledge thus acquired into our personal lives and using it in our daily lives.

ACTIVE VERBS

Deep Bible study requires effort. This fact emerges very clearly from a careful reading of Proverbs 2:1-6. Notice the active verbs that wise King Solomon used to underscore the effort needed to acquire spiritual knowledge, wisdom and discernment. He wrote: "My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; Yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasure; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom, from His mouth come knowledge and understanding." Yes, rewarding study of the Bible requires research, digging, in the search for hidden treasure.

Even as regular eating habits contribute to good physical health, a regular schedule for prayer, study and Bible reading is conducive to good spiritual health. In Luke's Gospel, we read Jesus' words "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?" (Luke 12:42)

To benefit fully from "their portion of food" provided in "due season," we need to have good feeding habits. It is essential to have a regular schedule for prayer, Bible reading and study and to stick to it.

Do you have good spiritual feeding habits? Or do you just skim the surface of the material, eating on the run, so to speak, or even skipping some meals altogether? Poor spiritual feeding habits have caused some to become weak in the faith – even to drift and disappear.

THE TIME IS NOW

Getting a life of any kind is hard enough in a world that has us going around in circles – from the stresses of our workplace to the demands of home and back again tomorrow. Getting a spiritual life can seem like a luxury to be put off to another, quieter time. But the search for a spiritual life begins not in some exotic, unreachable place but right where we are – in the midst of all the "craziness." It starts within our busy, stressed-out human heart, not in some other "more spiritual" place.

EASY BUT TRADITIONAL

In April, our niece Denise Alexis wrote an article in which she gave instructions for a traditional but easy Easter table. It received a flood of letters from grateful readers who were happy that they could keep the tradition, even though for some reason they could not spend as much time or energy as their mothers did in preparing it.

This month, Denise Alexis was gracious enough to do the same for the Christmas Eve (Viglia) Supper. It lets even those who live alone or in a restricted kitchen carry on this tradition of our people. How good it makes you feel even if you shed a few tears for those who are no longer with you.

The meal must be what is called a strict fast meal: no meat or dairy products. The food should be simple – no shrimp, caviar or lobster.

It is traditional to have 12 different dishes, but take as much as is possible from the following list and add any which are traditional with your family unit.

First, slice several onions, saute them in oil and use in following recipes.

Buy a can of sardines or tuna or a fillet of fried fish from the supermarket. Drain sardines or tuna. Serve as is or add a bit of finely chopped onion.

Open a can of peas. Heat and eat.

Open a can of lima beans. Heat and eat or make a soup with part or all. Make soup by adding a finely diced potato. Take some of the sauteed onions, add a bit of flour, lightly brown. Add some water. Cook until thickened. Add to bean and potato mixture.

Peel potato. Cut into chunks. Boil. Drain. Season with salt and pepper. Add sauteed onion.

Buy can or packet of sauerkraut. Drain and rinse with cold water. Fry in oil with some of the sauteed onions. Or make some into soup, using same formula as for lima bean soup.

Buy prunes. Cook according to directions on package. You can use mixed dried fruit instead. Use juice to eat with kutia.

Kutia is a must have dish. Because it is with grain and sweetened with honey, it symbolizes resurrection. The easiest grain to use is rice. Boil according to directions on package. When cooked, add honey to taste. Some families add poppyseeds and raisins. You can make this ahead of time and eat it room temperature.

Wine and tea.

Place white cloth on eating surface. if possible, buy a small bit of hay or straw in craft shop. Put under center of cloth. Have candle to light. Use a glass with grain as candleholder.

Recite the tropar for the Nativity before eating.

"Thy Nativity O Christ, our Lord has shown forth the light of knowledge to the world, for through it, those who studied the stars, learned from a star to worship Thee, the Orient from on high. O the Son of Truth and to know Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee." "Rozdestve tvoje Christe Boze nas, Vozsija mirovi svit razuma, V nem bo zvizdam sluzasciji svizdoju ucahusja, Tebi klanatisja Solncu pravdy. Hospodi, slava tebi."

As we finish our meal, we ask:
"Lord, bring us back next year,
And leave no empty chairs, we pray –
Like the star that led to Bethlehem,
Please be the Light that leads our way!"

MEDITATION

Heroism

We give thanks to You, O God of hosts, because You have allowed Your servant (*name*) to display great courage in time of crisis, and save the lives of those in distress. Hear his (*her*)prayers on this day, and allow him (*her*) to receive all the good things that he (*she*) asks for in life; we pray to You, O Lord: Hear us and have mercy.

All praise and glory be to You, O Christ our God! You have allowed Your servant (*name*) to answer Your call in showing selfless love for another, and rescued a life from the pangs of pain and death. Through the prayers of all Your holy martyrs, grant that he (*she*) always show courage and practicing Your commandments, and teach others to do the same; we pray to You, O Lord: Hear us and have mercy.

O Jesus our Savior, You told us through the Apostle John the Theologian, "that there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." As we honor the heroic deeds of Your servant (*name*), may we, too, have the same courage to help others in their time of need. If he (*she*) has become physically ill in any way, let him (*her*) have a speedy recovery, so that, he (*she*) and all of us may together praise Your goodness; we pray to You, O Lord: Hear us and have mercy.

Ray Mastroberte

Whatever

Christmas has become a secular holiday. Non-Christians, agnostics, Buddists in Japan – all celebrate Christmas. Do you remember last year when a stamp was 33 cents and we were greeted with "Happy 'Who-lidays'" from the U.S. Postal Service?

Prayer does not consist merely in standing and bowing with your body or in reading written prayers: it is possible to pray at all times, in all places, with the mind and spirit. You can lift up your mind and heart to God while walking, sitting, working, in a crowd and in solitude. His door is always open, unlike man's. We can always say to Him in our hearts: "Lord! Lord! have mercy!"

St. Tikhon Zadonsk

The custom of building snowmen supposedly dates back to a Slavic folktale about an older couple who were lonely for a child. According to the story, the woman made a pair of white slippers, and, magically, a little snow child appeared the next day. Every winter, the snow child lived with them and melted in the spring. This and other folktales are said to symbolize renewal and rejuvenation, a welcome thought in long, cold winters.

Many people would like the Divine Liturgy to resemble a television program made to fit into an hour's space.

We go down the central aisle when we go to receive Holy Communion and at the end of the service when we go to venerate the Cross. We then use the side aisles to return to our seats or to exit the Church. This is the proper procedure, because it is a sign of disrespect to turn our backs to the Holy Altar.

Effie is a nickname for Euphemia, an Orthodox saint whose memory is celebrated on July 11. The name means "pleasant speech" in Greek. The name Effie was common in the 19th century.

The Bible makes it clear that before his conversion St. Paul was a highly-educated student of the great rabbi Gamaliel. The constant use, in his epistles, of materials from the Old Testament and the Apocrypha make it clear that one consequence of his education was expertise in the use of Jewish scriptures.



EDITORS' NOTES

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

So much of the month of December is the time of Advent or preparing for the coming of Christ. People in this country prepare in many ways – some meditate more about the life of Christ, fast and pray and gain a sense of peace with which they welcome the Nativity of Jesus Christ attaining the angelic saying in Luke 2:14: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Others rush around in a frenzy – from store to store, from party to party. They hope to get a bit of peace and quiet but it eludes them, as they do not allow themselves any downtime to even think about the reason for the celebration. Christ is forgotten in the rush, rush.

Most are somewhere in the middle straddling both ways of preparing for the great day.

As the day becomes more secularized, it will take effort to prepare for it; the Church teaches so that we may attain PEACE.

This is the last issue of 2001. We receive the most comments on the behavior of children in the church. The question most asked is why don't people make their children behave in church. Let them stay at home, if they can't behave. The children get no benefit from church attendance and they upset others and keep them from praying. Whose place is it to tell the parents? In most parishes bad behavior is tolerated because of fear of offending the parents. Any solutions?

Christmas is not only the day on which we celebrate the Birth of Christ. According to the hymns of the Church, it is much more. We are reminded over and over: "God is with us. Rejoice O you people, for God is with us!" He is not just any baby, He is God become man.

From our house to yours, may the Christ child's peace surround your hearts and homes.

Christos Rázdaetsya!

Slavite Eho!

The Stroyens

FUNDS

ALASKA - Many (hundreds) of copies of **The Orthodox Herald** go to the small villages in Alaska. The elder of each village has the important function of passing on the traditions, religious traditions and lore on how to function in the harsh environment far from 911. The native Alaskan is imbued with the necessity of following tradition exactly as it has been passed down to him. This has kept many from becoming "rice bowl" Christians. They keep the pure Orthodox faith as their elders have been taught. This strong eldership is not understood at times by clergy coming from the lower 48 with disastrous results. We do understand it and urge our Alaskan brothers and sisters to hold tight to the Orthodox faith as it has been passed down to them. Helping to send copies this month are: Louis Michalko, Tom Swift, and Paul and Marion Stanko.

MISSION - Walter and Tania Booriakin, Ethel Watlock, Robert Popp

BOTH ALASKA AND MISSION - Dora Daley, Anonymous, Stella Sahonchik

POSTAGE - Andrew Huzinec, Walter and Tania Booriakin, Anonymous, Dora Daley, Margaret Chervenko, Stella Sahonchik, Lillian Bizup, Ray Rusnak, Elizabeth Zbegner, John Edward Dallas, Mary Zeleniak, Sergay Sheratene, Olga Lobas, Allen Lucas

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I have had this recipe for many years. It is a typical Carpatho-Russian recipe given to me by a parishioner in the early 50's. I like to make it because the dough is easy to work with and once you make the pastries they freeze well. You may like the pastry enough to make it with different fillings.

CARPATHIAN COFFEE CRESCENTS

3 cups all-purpose flour
3 Tbls. sugar
1 cup (2 sticks) well-chilled unsalted butter
3 egg yolks, beaten
2 pkgs. dry yeast dissolved in 1/2 cup lukewarm milk
1 1/2 teas. vanilla

FILLING:
3 egg whites, room temperature
1 cup sugar
2 teas. cinnamon
1/2 cup ground nut meats
1 egg, beaten with 2 teas. water
powdered sugar (optional)

Combine dry ingredients for dough. Cut in butter until mixture resembles corn meal. Add egg yolks, yeast mixture and vanilla. Blend until combined. Wrap tightly and refrigerate overnight. Divide into 6 equal parts. Make filling. Beat egg whites until stiff. Gradually beat in 2/3 cup sugar. Combine remaining sugar with cinnamon and nuts. Grease baking sheets. On lightly floured surface, roll out one piece of dough until very thin. Brush with egg white and then sprinkle with some of the nut mixture. Using sharp knife, cut into eight equal wedges. Starting at large end, roll wedges up. Shape gently into crescent shape. Transfer to greased baking sheet, placing about two inches apart. Repeat with remaining dough pieces. Let stand at room temperature about 30 minutes to rise. Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly brush each crescent with beaten egg. Bake about 20 minutes, until crisp and pale gold. Let cool on wire rack. Dust with powdered sugar, if desired.

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Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

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GOD IS WITH US!

There is a service which we are privileged to attend only three times a year. It is called the Great Compline, and it is served on the Eve of Christmas, Epiphany, and sometimes the Eve of the Annunciation.

The service consists of three parts. Each one starts with the invitation to: "Come let us worship God our King..." and ends with a blessing from the priest.

The first part consists of seven Psalms and readings of the prophecies from Isaiah with the hypnotic singing of "God is with us..." The Creed is recited and a prayer of St. Basil: "Lord, who has delivered us from every arrow that flies by day, deliver us also from all the things that infest the darkness..." In this first part we give thanks to God for the day that has just past and we express hope that He will grant us a peaceful night.

The second part of the Great Compline Service is penitential and includes the 51st Psalm and the moving penitential prayer of Manasseh (discussed in the March 2001 issue of **The Orthodox Herald**.

The third part consists of glorifying God, and the saints. Here we again ask for peaceful sleep.

Unfortunately, this service on Christmas Eve is very poorly attended. Many people forget that it is a vigil service whose structure is one of quietness and peacefulness.

* * * * * *

Faith is like a muscle and prayer is the exercise that helps it grow.

Home Bible Reading Schedule

DECEMBER 2001

1	Gal 3:8-12	16	**Col 1:12-18**
2	**Eph 5:9-19**	17	Heb 3:5-10, 17-19
3	1 Tim 5:1-10	18	Heb 4:1-13
4	1 Tim 5:11-21	19	Heb 5:11-14; 6:1-8
5	1 Tim 5:22-23; 6-1-11	20	Heb 7:1-6
		21	Heb 7:18-25
6	1 Tim 6:17-21	22	Eph 2:11-13
7	2 Tim 1:1-2, 8-18	23	**Heb 11:9-10, 32-40**
8	Gal 5:22-26; 6:1-2		
9	**Eph 6:10-17**	24	Heb 3:5-11
10	2 Tim 2:20-26	25	Gal 3:23-29; 4:1-5
11	2 Tim 3:16-17; 4:1-4	26	Heb 8:7-13
		27	Heb 1:1-12
12	2 Tim 4:9-22	28	Heb 11:8, 11-16
13	Titus 1:1-14	29	1 Tim 6:11-16
14	Titus 1:15-16; 2:1-10	30	**Gal 1:11-12**
		31	Heb 11:17-23, 27-31
15	Eph 1:1		

BIBLE STUDY

If we would think about it for a minute, each of us would have his own picture of Jesus Christ. Some see Him as the Comforter, others as the Great Teacher, yet others as the Saviour. Rarely would one think of Him as the Divine Warrior. Somehow, we have lost the heroism of Christ and made Him into a "Jesus, meek and mild."

In Ephesians 6:10-17, St. Paul reminds us of the dynamic work of Christ when he exhorts us to: "Put on the whole armour of God. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against ... spiritual wickedness."

Doubtless, St. Paul was recalling Isaiah's vision of a **Divine Warrior** sent by God to avenge His people: "Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, This One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength?" (Isaiah 61:1)

The Imagery of battlefield and blood-stained garments is not one which we readily apply to Christ. Yet the sight of Him scourged and bleeding on the Cross is an accurate fulfillment of Isaiah's vision.

It will help our understanding if we see the Cross as the spiritual battlefield and Christ as the Divine Warrior victorious over the evils of sin, pain, suffering and death.

All we who have entered His life through baptism, must share in the battle if we are to realize the victory. By the choices we make, the prayers we offer, and the service we undertake in His Name, we join Him in the spiritual battle.

The enemies of Christ are: hatred, pride, selfishness and despair. Against them, He brought the weapons of: forgiveness, trust, faith, hope, and love. Hie enemies are our enemies. His weapons are also ours.

LIGHTER MOMENT

A minister answered his phone to hear a woman's voice say, "Send me six cases of beer." He recognized the voice as that of a parishioner. Anticipating an apology, he responded sharply, "My dear lady, this is your minister"? "Indeed"! screamed the lady indignantly, unaware that she had dialed the wrong number, "And just what are you doing in a brewery"?